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Religious Reciprocity.

An unusual and striking example of religious reciprocity says the Belfast Telegraph, has been effected and will soon be in process of realisation. The occasion is noteworthy. Nearly a hundred years ago two religious organisations, the one British and the other American, came into existence on successive days without any prearrangement. The former became known as the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, while its Transatlantic contemporary was designated the American Unitarian Association. For many months interested members of both bodies have been anticipating the two centennials forthcoming in May and seeking some effective method of marking their arrival. The plan finally adopted was the following: Each association is to send to its contemporary's country, and centennial gatherings a specially selected body of ministers who will work under the auspices of their hospitable hosts. Great Britain will be represented by five Ministers, one of whom, it is interesting to record, is chosen from Belfast—the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., of the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street. Along with three fellow-ministers from England, he sailed from Liverpool on 7th March,

while a fifth minister will follow on March 21. On their arrival in Boston they will be received as guests of the American Unitarian Association, and under its auspices engage in extensive preaching and lecturing tours. California will be the principal sphere of operation of one minister, while another will make the more Southern States his field of labour. Mr. Rossington's tour will comprise the principal cities in the East, Central, and Northern States, among them New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Kansas City, Oklahoma, St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland, and Rochester. These tours will occupy about eight or nine weeks, and by the time of their conclusion the touring ministers will have returned to Boston to attend with other British delegates the American centennial gatherings from May 10 to May 17. But about the time they start from Liverpool for Boston a corresponding American delegation of four selected ministers will cross the Atlantic en route for Liverpool. On their arrival they will undertake duties arranged for them by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, preparatory to its centennial gathering beginning in London on June 2, and among the duties arranged for them will be that of supplying Mr. Rossington's pulpit in Rosemary Street. They have not visited the North of Ireland hitherto, hence a special interest attaches to their coming, and it is hoped that Ulster's capital will make a most favourable impression upon their minds. There have always been interesting and intimate ties between Ireland and America. This religious reciprocity is designed to strengthen them still further. One of the objects most stressed in the plan of operations given to both British and American delegates is that of creating a real "entente cordiale."

Notes of the Month.

Attention has already been drawn to the interesting fact that the American Unitarian Association and the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, will each celebrate its centenary during the current three months, the one in May, at Boston, Mass., and the other in London early in June. Delegates from Great Britain will attend the celebrations in America and later representatives from America will attend the proceedings in London.

* *

"It is felt that if each visiting body is able to study at first hand the chief centres of life and activity across the sea, it is bound to lead to a more sympathetic understanding of each other's problems and peculiarities. Every opportunity will therefore be given the tourists of seeing varied phases of thought and activity. Not only will churches be visited, but schools and colleges will be open to inspection and large industries examined in detail. The British visitors will be shown in the neighbourhood of Boston, places associated with the leading literary men and women of America—Emerson, Louisa Alcott, Margaret Fuller, Longfellow, Russel Lowell, W. C. Bryant, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and many others."

* *

We feel sure that every effort will be made to show an equal attention to those American visitors who will each spend a short time in our midst. We shall be delighted to have them with us. The North of Ireland has a stirring story to tell to visitors and many unique things to exhibit. Ulstermen and women are justly proud of their great University whose graduates are faithfully doing their duty in the four corners of the world; of their churches; of their public schools; of their gigantic industries which hold a place second to none. There is much to tell and plenty to show. The occasion will be great. The visitors on both sides will gain invaluable ex-

perience. May they find on both parts that they are related to each other, that they share the same ideals and that they are called upon to join forces in the realisation of peace and the well-being of mankind.

* *

Alluding to our domestic affairs it is seasonable to intimate that the Annual Meeting of the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians and other Free Christians, will be held in the First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, on Tuesday, 21st April, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The acting Secretary sends out an earnest appeal to all members of the constituent Churches to come in to the meeting and help in its deliberations. Hitherto the attendance at these meetings has tended to dwindle and the interest to wane. This is not as it should be. A larger attendance would lend encouragement and it is possible that the resultant good would make its appearance in unexpected places.

|| * *

The Association's business has of course been largely restricted since in 1907 the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland was organised. But even so, much important work is done which is of immediate interest to all our Churches. The Association has under its supervision the very important institution known to all as the Orphan Society and at the Annual Meetings, the report of the Orphan Society is dealt with, and new Governors appointed.

* *

An added feature of interest at the forthcoming Meeting will be the presentation of the first Annual Report, by the trustees of the Bodel-Mackenzie Fund. As will be remembered this fund was established by the testatory munificence of the ladies mentioned, and has for its object the assistance of distressed ladies who are of our household of faith. After the establishment of the Fund it was splendidly augmented by the late Mr. Alexander Spence, who shortly before his death

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meets in the CENTRAL HALL, ROSEMARY STREET, at 8 p.m., Third Thursday of the month, October to May, inclusive.

OBJECTS (inter alia).

To encourage laymen to take a more active part in the work of the Churches.

To form a bond of union and closer co-operation between the members of the various congregations.

The Committee invite those who are not already members to join. The minimum subscription is 2/6, and further particulars may be obtained from—

MR. FRANK A. ROBINSON,

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MR. J. H. GILLILAND,

33 Gresham Street, Belfast, Asst. Hon. Sec

added to the investments held by the trustees, the sum of five hundred pounds. Mr. Spence worked hard for some years to get this fund formed and into working order. We share the regrets expressed by the writer in our obituary column at the loss of a friend, knowing full well that we shall miss his bright personality and optimism. May we meet with more like him !

Easter.

Easter is one of the old world festivals, the festival of Spring, which the Christian Church adopted, as it did other festivals. Easter has several meanings. One of these is in connection with the solar myth, the story of the Sun-god, who was born on Christmas Day, crucified on Good Friday, and rose again on Easter Sunday; the crucifixion being the cross, which the sun makes when crossing the line from South to North.

"Great are the storms and tribulations of winter, but the Sun-god survives them all, and his strength is steadily growing as the days lengthen towards the vernal equinox. At the equinox as the name implies, day and night are exactly equal; and after it the sun crosses the line, so that in the northern hemisphere, the days grow steadily longer, and the victory of the Sun-god over night is assured. He rises triumphantly over the line and ascends in the heavens, ripening the corn and the grape, pouring his life into them to make their substance, and through them giving himself to his worshippers." That was the idea that people had of Easter, before the time of Christ.

Nature herself had been dead all through the frost and cold of winter, and now under the greater light and warmth was being resurrected in the opening leaves and flowers and the grain and the fruit which in due time would appear.

Now we have the story of Christ as it is in the New Testament. We are a free church and our members are at liberty to have their own opinions. But, whatever the value of the stories of Christ's life as actual history, the greatest teachers of the Early Church placed more value on the stories as symbolical, than as records of something that actually happened. As in the old hymn :—

"Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
But not within thyself,
Thy life is all forlorn."

That is to say, if the Birth, the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the Ascension are not to be things in your own experience, the stages of history in your soul's life, then what happened two thousand years ago in the earthly life of Jesus is of little consequence.

There are then three resurrections we might think of in connection with Easter. There is the resurrection of Nature after the winter sleep, and that is a reminder that the power of life is stronger than death; which brings us to the second type of resurrection, which is, that the soul at death rises from the body into a fuller and richer life; and the third is the resurrection, which Christ spoke of, when He said: "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live," meaning by the dead those who were spiritually dead, whom Paul called "carnally minded," for to be carnally minded is death. Christ meant He could rouse people out of that death. The only real death the soul can know is in the forgetfulness of itself when it is lost in an animal life.

There is yet a still higher kind of resurrection to be experienced in this life, which is the wakening of the sleeping Christ in every man, woman and child, and Christ Jesus is the first fruit of them that slept. In

Paris there is a reclining monument of "the Sleeping Christ," one of the most beautiful monuments of Christ in the whole world. The face is like that of one asleep. It is in a Memorial Chapel, erected in memory of ladies burned in a bazaar which caught fire.

That Sleeping Christ in marble represents surely the Christ that is in vast numbers of people. Our bodies are tombs, but in them is one asleep, the inner Christ, and the outer Christ, who is awake, who is called the first fruits, comes and shouts his life-giving, rousing, resurrecting word, "Come forth." The sleeping Christ is very much asleep in the lowest types of human beings, such as savages, very little more than animals. He is gradually awakening in others more advanced. But in some He is more fully awake. If we placed those in whom He is very much asleep at the foot of the ladder, and then at every step above, those in whom He is more and more awake, we should have a ladder stretching from the mud of earth to the glorious light of heaven, with the Lord over all.

This is a faith which has been forgotten, but the early Church had it, and in one word it means evolution, which is God's way of working, simply a process of wakening up, "asleep in the stone, breathing in the plant, moving in the animal and awakening in man." Jesus was type of the first fruits in whom the Christ shone forth, and God is hid in Christ. There is a meaning ever fresh and new in the old Easter salutation: "He is risen."

ULLIN.

MARRIAGE.

FOSTER—COCHRANE.—On Wednesday, February 25th, at First Presbyterian Church, Downpatrick, by the Rev. John Begg, William Rigby, twin son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Rigby Foster, Strandtown, to Laura Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John F. Cochrane, Downpatrick.

Young People's Page.

"HOLY WEEK."

This year Easter Sunday falls upon the 12th April, and Palm Sunday upon the 5th April. The week between these two Sundays is known as Holy Week or Passion Week (passion=suffering) and it is interesting to remember some of the old customs of the Church which are, or were celebrated during this week. In Rome thousands of visitors assemble for Holy Week, and at Jerusalem pilgrims from all over the world, including many American and English protestant tourists gather for this week and to keep the feast of Easter. Mr. Robert Hichens, author of "The Garden of Allah," in his book on the holy land gives a very terrible and very vivid description of his visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on Good Friday, where 12,000 armed soldiers tried to keep order amongst the Copts, Greeks, Romans, Armenians, Russians, Arabs and English there assembled.

Palm Sunday has several interesting customs which commemorate the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Palms, or branches of willow to represent them—are used for decoration in many churches.

In some of the English villages this day is known as "Fig Sunday" and it is the custom to have fig puddings and to eat figs on Palm Sunday. Probably this is connected with the story of the withering of the barren fig tree which follows the story of the entry into Jerusalem.

The Wednesday of this week is known as "Spy Wednesday," and the Thursday as "Holy Thursday" or "Maundy Thursday." It used to be the custom for the Kings of England to wash the feet of some poor men—as many men as the King was years old—as an act of humility and in memory of Christ washing the disciples' feet. Queen Elizabeth performed this ceremony on 39 poor people

when she was 39 years old. James II. was the last King to perform the act personally, but for many years after the washing was done by the King's Almoner. Now the washing is entirely given up, also the distribution of meat and clothes which formerly accompanied the ceremony, and money is given instead—The Silver Maundy Money.

A special service is held at Westminster Abbey, during which there are two distributions of alms to a number of old men and of old women, the number of each sex corresponding to the age of the sovereign. First, each old woman gets 35/- and each old man 45/-, in place of clothing; next, there is a distribution of red and white purses, the former containing £1, and £1 10s. in gold, in place of food—the men getting the larger sum, and the latter contain the special Maundy coins—silver pennies, two-pences, threepences and fourpences, as many pence as the sovereign's age. These purses are distributed by the Lord High Almoner and are carried in baskets. Some say the word **Maundy** is derived from the Latin **mandatum**—the **command** given by Jesus to imitate His example of love; others say it is from **maund** a corruption of the Saxon **maund**—basket.

The custom of having Hot Cross Buns on Good Friday is very old—in fact it is probably of Roman origin and was afterwards Christianized.

The Romans made sacred cakes in honour of Diana, whose festival was observed about the time of the vernal equinox. It is a strange proof of the Roman origin of these buns, that the first home of the custom, and where it is most observed, is in Cambridge and Hertfordshire, where the old Roman Roads crossed, and where in Roman times stood the altar of Diana of the crossways.

Bread baked on Good Friday was said never to grow mouldy, and a few gratings of this bread in water, was thought to be a cure for most ailments.

The word "Bun" is said to be de-

rived from the Egyptian sacred cakes which were horned to resemble their sacred heifer and called *bons*—hence **bonn, bun**.

Before the Reformation Good Friday was celebrated in England with all the ceremonies still kept in Roman Catholic countries and one of the old customs was the blessing, and distributing of "Cramp Rings" by the king—the belief in the medical power of these rings was very general.

At Brighton Good Friday used to be known as "Long Rope Day," and the fishing community there spent the day skipping, with a long rope; this is almost a thing of the past now. In Sussex the local custom was to play marbles on Good Friday, possibly this had some connection with the casting of lots.

We are interested in these old ceremonies and mysteries, but we have outgrown them in spirit. Robert Louis Stevenson says—"It is a great thing if you can persuade people that they are somehow or other partakers in a mystery. It makes them feel bigger," but we feel we have learnt to realise truths in our hearts, without having to act them, or see them acted. C. T.

CHRIST'S WISDOM

Rejoice ye, Christ's disciples,
Who learn His sacred lore;
The hearts that know His wisdom
Still love Him more and more.
Many there be who grasp not
The Faith that He doth teach;
We thank Him for the doctrine
Here placed within our reach.
The wisdom that is taught us
Fills all our souls with light,
Brings an unfailling touchstone
To know the true and right.
It gives a wider outlook,
Strengthens the power of will,
The selfishness it crushes
That wrought so much of ill.
It lightens every sorrow,
Broad tolerance it gives,
With sympathy it fills us,
With love for all that lives.
And most of all it bids us
Cast thoughts of self away,
And first consider others
In all we do or say.

St. Alban's Hymnal.

Temperance Notes.

BLUE BOOKS. In spite of the "evils" of Party Politics, we do believe, the most of us, that the State cares for the individual. We believe that the Government does its best for the people under its care. With this good end in view it calls upon the aid of the real authorities in the land to advise it, and to instruct the people. The Board of Agriculture, for example, issues very valuable "Blue Books," Pamphlets and Leaflets which are very valuable to, and much appreciated by, many farmers, plowholders and owners of gardens. Personally we have heard of farmers professing to laugh at these attempts at "teaching one's grandmother to suck eggs," but I have seen these very Blue Books in the homes of these scoffers!

Now the Board of Education issues most valuable Blue Books on innumerable vital subjects and I intend summarizing here (and in our next) what this wise Board has to say about Alcohol. The Government of the day must consider itself very curiously placed as regards this stuff because although it derives enormous revenue (which it devotes to good work, chiefly educational!) yet it very stringently curtails the liberty of the traffic, guards most carefully that the restricting laws are carried out, and in its Blue Book informs us that Alcohol works most harmfully upon the efficiency of the human organism!

ALCOHOLIC DRINK AS FOOD. The Board of Education Syllabus first explains how 'alcoholic beverages cannot be regarded as a source of nourishment.' After stating there is a wee bit of sugar, and 'a small quantity of the food substance found in meat' yet 'to obtain enough food from beer for it to be of serious consequence as a source of energy, however, it would be necessary to take an extremely large quantity, and the good that might be done by the nourishing part of the beer would be more than counter-balanced by the harm done by the

alcohol contained in so large a quantity.

It then goes on to say that to attempt to take beer as a food, quite apart from the great harm, would be very expensive. Ever so much cheaper to buy real good food itself. And then goes on "For these two reasons, therefore, beer cannot be considered to be one of the foods which the body requires. Moreover, alcoholic beverages do not, as a rule, quench thirst as water and tea do; in fact thirst may be created and increased instead of being satisfied."

Of course, most of us know all this, yet it is sadly true that very many of its citizens are far below the standard of wisdom proclaimed by the State.

After showing that alcohol is very useful in certain industrial arts and manufactures, the Syllabus goes on to tell of the EFFECT OF ALCOHOL ON THE NERVOUS SYSTEM. I think this section is worth copying in full.

"Contrary to popular opinion the effect of alcohol on the nervous system is to depress rather than to stimulate its functions.

The apparent stimulating action, as shown by the stage of excitement through which the drinker may pass, is due to its depressing action upon the highest and latest developed part of the brain—namely, that which is associated with the exercise of the intellect and of the will.

The emotions released from proper control are left free play to respond to the immediate environment in which the drinker finds himself, and this, as a rule, is of a convivial character.

The emotional characteristics are the oldest established; they have their seat in certain lower parts of the brain which are developed early in the animal scale. Next in order of development come the nerve-centres associated with the sensory and skilled motor functions, and latest of all is developed that part of the brain connected with the higher intellectual faculties. Thus, the action of alcohol

is to depress the functions of the brain from above downward in the reverse order of their development in the individual and in the race."

SELF-CONTROL A HUMAN TRIUMPH. That last quotation from the Syllabus should be thoroughly appreciated. It contains a fact both beautiful and wonderful. Alcohol affects the various parts of the body in a precise order. In fact, in the order in which these things come to the human organism in its evolution. The oldest parts (the breathing for example) are the least delicate, and the last to be destroyed by poisons. Parts of the brain are very old, but we can trace in the brain quite clearly, newer parts which are higher in their duties and more easily upset. The most wonderful, most delicate part of the brain, is the centre of self-control; it is one of the latest endowments of man, and it is **the first to be affected by alcohol.**

On the other hand, the very oldest parts of the brain (say that controlling breathing) are the least delicate. They are the first to come to us, but the last to be poisoned, for when that goes the man dies.

The law concerning the different levels of the brain is a wonderful study, and alcohol's effect illustrates it perfectly.

P. G.

Waning Religious Classics.

The great reputation attained by many of the religious Classics was originally created by literary guides who subscribed to the doctrines which these works advocated. The favourable judgment was carried down to and repeated by succeeding critics who also adhered to the same dogmas, finally when the foundations of these books were shaken, people continued to hold them in great esteem, finding other reasons for doing so, but to-day we are outgrowing the worshipping of literary productions with whose central ideas

and views of life we totally disagree. Such Classics as "The Divine Comedy," "Paradise Lost," "The Pilgrim's Progress," and "The Imitation of Christ," are saturated in whole or in part with theological dogmas that have been discarded by many people to-day, and the religious value of these classics has waned in proportion to the extent of the outgrown theology pervading them. It is a matter of great regret (but is it not inevitable) that some of the ablest writers have embraced doctrines that have become obsolete. Outgrown dogmas vitiate these, our greatest religious classics. Philip Wicksteed, with all his eloquent and masterly elucidation of "The Divine Comedy," cannot annihilate the bigotry and fatuity of the medieval ages. Though Dante is regarded as one of the three greatest of the world's poets, there is much in his poem that does not appeal to us as vital to-day. Are not the number of religious people increasing who feel with Emerson, when he says of Dante "A man to put in a Museum, but not in your house."

"Paradise Lost" holds he distinction of being the greatest narrative poem in the English Language. It is a tale of the origin and history of man's misfortunes and attempts a solution of them. It treats of the creation of the universe, of the justice of God, and of the origin of evil. The tale of how the Garden of Eden was lost, many to-day ask, did it ever exist? There is the mournful event of how human nature lost its perfection which modern thought does not believe it ever possessed. It has an excellently drawn portrait of Satan, a personality that, we are glad to say, has been outgrown by nearly all Christian Churches to-day. Is it any wonder that Carlyle wrote—"Paradise Lost" is absurd. I never could take to it—though now and again clouds of splendour rolled "in upon the scene."

"The Pilgrim's Progress" has been translated into about seventy-five languages and dialects, and is a first

rate missionary handbook for spreading orthodox Christianity. "Christian" in his wanderings through many dangers, trials and temptations to reach the Celestial City, is presumed to be a type of mankind in search of truth and righteousness and the allegory has won admiration because of the vivid pictures of scenes where Christian's hardest difficulties took place such as the "Slough of Despond," the "Valley of Humiliation," where he fought with Appolyon the "Valley of the Shadow of Death," and "Vanity Fair;" pleasant stages in the journey are the "Interpreter's House," the "Palace Beautiful," "Beulah Land," and the "Celestial City," itself. In it are portrayed characters familiar to us all, such as Pliable, Worldly-wise man, Mr By-Ends, and Great Heart. It has charmed many by its simplicity of style, but that its influence is waning is manifest in all the churches. One of our leading laymen admitted to me recently that he had never even read the "Pilgrim's Progress." Francis Thompson says of it.—"We have searched the book in vain for a single scene with a master-touch of delineation."

"The Imitation of Christ" is really an apology for the life of a monk. The keynote of the book is in its detestation of Nature. It has not a word to say about a beautiful landscape or sunset, nor about feminine beauty and charm. Everything natural is so condemned that we refuse to venerate a body of precepts that we know cannot be practised by a normal man. Life is to be continued and enjoyed, we believe, by giving Nature her due, instead of conforming conduct to the mandates of an outgrown theology. "We conquer Nature by obeying her." Christianity to-day has outgrown much of the ascetic teaching of à Kempis, though the scholar may still find in the book something that appeals to him, for he, like the monk lives a secluded life, devoted to his ideal, scorning the world, giving up minor pleasures for a great one; but the reader must be intellect-

ually fettered to reap the full benefit of "The Imitation of Christ." The book has been translated into over fifty languages and has gone through more than six thousand editions. It is a book of devotion, written in Holland in the early part of the fifteenth century, by the manuscript copyist, Thomas Haemmerlein, and has probably done more to keep alive medieval dogma than any other book since published. Who has not felt nevertheless the charm and uplift of the "Imitation of Christ?" Dr. Martineau's feeling is universal—"the sublime and lovely conditions of the spiritual life as presented in the *Imitatio Christi*."

Books of the old writers permeated with the ideas of monasticism, stoicism, feudalism and puritanism, are losing their value for us to-day, the world having moved beyond many of their doctrines and sentiments. That the ancient writers thought differently, felt differently, and consequently wrote differently than is general to-day, is only natural. The standards of one age cannot be those of another, and hence the shifting of ancient moral and literary values, is but to follow truth through the light of modern thought. "They must onward still and upward who would keep abreast of Truth." The trust in the human quest and the benediction that inevitably follows is beautifully expressed in Leigh Hunt's poem on Ben Adhem—

'Exceeding Peace had made Ben Adhem bold—

To the Presence in the room he said,
What writest Thou? The Vision raised
its head

And with a look made of all sweet accord
Answered—The names of those who love
the Lord.

And is mine one? said Abou, Nay, not so
replied

the Angel. Abou spoke more low but
cheerly still

And said, I pray Thee then write me as
one that

Loves his fellow men. The Angel wrote
and vanished,

The next night it came again with a great
wakening light,

And showed the names whom love of God
had blessed

And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

Regeneration.

The Fourth Gospel tells us about the astonishment of a Jew, named Nicodemus, on being told by Jesus that aspirants for the kingdom of heaven must be born again (*iii.* 1-7). People who cherish the principles of the Non-subscribing Presbyterian Church do not often talk of the necessity for "re-birth." They do not think it necessary to subscribe to any scripture of the Old or New Testament any more than to the statements of any particular creed claiming to be drawn up in strict accord with Biblical doctrine. They consider it the duty of every intelligent person to do his best to seek language best adapted to his own understanding and the understanding of his contemporaries for the conscientious statement of his religious belief which he wishes to make for his own benefit and for theirs. Allowing himself that liberty or perhaps it were more correct to say, endeavouring to discharge this duty, he is almost certain to depart from the use of language occurring in the sacred Scriptures even where he believes he understands and accepts the doctrine it expresses. For the terms employed in a text written many centuries ago and for the use of readers of a very different nationality and of habits of thought very different from our own, are apt to be ill suited to convey the doctrine, *which, on the assumption of the reasonability of believing it, we call the truth*: and not merely so, those terms are liable to be quite misleading unless accompanied by an explanation of the circumstances under which they were originally employed. By their reading of the gospel passage referred to above (as by their reading of many others) those worthy Christians who think it a virtue to adhere not merely to scriptural doctrine but to scriptural language as well, are led far astray. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God," they read (*Jn.* 3. 3.) So they say,

"Except you are born again you cannot be saved—when you can say, 'I have been born again,' you can also say, 'I am saved;' but not till then." Doubtless, a person here and there, who has led an habitually thoughtless or even impious life, has suddenly repented, and begun, and continued, to live a life as consistently conscientious, religious and good. And it were legitimate enough to speak of the regeneration or re-birth of such an one, or to say that he had been "born again." An alternative expression would be that he had become "a new man." Yet in his regenerate life he is not freer from little imperfections of character or conduct than many an excellent person, who, (not without his faults, which he would not "dissemble or cloke before Almighty God his heavenly Father") has never been scandalous or irreligious, and has made on the contrary a faithful endeavour after the Christian life from his infancy and onwards. Yet this latter type of person, because he could not pretend to point to a particular moment of conversion, enlightenment or change of heart, the "born-again" Christians would declare to be not saved!

Let us now turn for a minute to the Fourth Gospel and to Nicodemus. Does that Scripture really teach that doctrine which these *scriptural* Christians claim to draw from it? What sort of a person was Nicodemus? What made Jesus utter such a strange affirmation about qualification for the kingdom of heaven?

Nicodemus is said to have been a Pharisee. He is typical therefore of a large section of the Jewish nation who were contemporary with Jesus nearly two thousand years ago; who were characterized by an almost fanatical zeal for the Law of Moses as set forth in certain books of the Old Testament and expounded and enlarged by the persons—half lawyers, half theological scholars—whom we know as the scribes. The Pharisees believed in the *kingdom of heaven*, or

kingdom of God, as it is called in this Fourth Gospel passage?† and in all places where it is referred to in the Second and Third Gospels. They believed in it, and wanted to get into it. They even expected that everyone who lived in accordance with the Law of Moses would be sure of a place in it. Jesus on the other hand taught that the Law of Moses was not good enough, or that the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees resulting from *their* reading of the Law) was not good enough (Mt. v. 20). Most of the Pharisees professed to be shocked at Jesus setting himself up as a critic of the Law; many of them being quite sincerely shocked. So powerful was the Pharisaic aversion from what they took to be a tendency of the teaching of Jesus to destroy the authority of the scribes and to dispense with the Law of Moses itself, that it resulted in the crucifixion of Jesus. Yet there had been a few Pharisees—and perhaps Nicodemus may be taken for one of them—who felt strongly attracted by the reasonable guidance to religious conduct, or good and godly life offered by Jesus; and even though they too recognised the same tendency of his teaching to make the Law superfluous or obsolete, they would have accepted him gladly for their guide, in spite of that, if only there had been some miraculous sign vouchsafed to them that he was divinely ordained to supersede the venerable Moses, over and above the fruits of goodness in the lives of his disciples which even such as Nicodemus were willing to consider to be signs‡ as far as they went (Jn. iii. 2.) Yet so tremendously strong was the Pharisaic prejudice against Jesus, due to zeal for the ancient Law, that it might well be said that a Jew must be born again—make a new start altogether in thought first and in conduct of life afterwards—or else he would be incapable of seeking that qualification for membership in the kingdom of God which he, Jesus, taught to be essential.

Jesus was confronted with the opposition of the Pharisees continuously to the end. Had he experienced contact with a larger world, with its various nationalities and their very widely different traditions and modes of thought, perhaps He would never have talked of the necessity of being born again or anew or from above. And yet perhaps He would have done so all the same. For whatever his potentialities may be, every man is born into the world a carnal being, with little or nothing that can be called knowledge of God; before he can attain to such knowledge and account it a gain, must he not be born anew, a spiritual being?

That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. (John iii: 6, 7).

**Revised version*.—"born anew."

†The "kingdom" is mentioned in John in one passage only; though possibly one should add xviii: 36.

‡The Greek word translated "miracles" in John iii: 2 (A.V.), ought to have been translated *signs* (as in R.V.).

"Outlines of the History of Presbyterianism in Ireland,"

BY DR. H. MONTGOMERY.

A Grey Abbey Incident.

A remarkable instance of the progress of public enlightenment occurred about this time, in the congregation of Grey-Abbey, which had presented a unanimous Call to Samuel Martin Stephenson, a probationer connected with the Presbytery of Templepatrick. The congregation was under the care of the Presbytery of Bangor; and Mr. Stephenson was informed that previously to his ordination, he must subscribe the Confession. With this requisition, he refused to comply, and assigned his reasons in a printed Statement, for the satisfaction of his

people. His explanation happily secured their entire concurrence ; and he resolved to seek ordination from the Presbytery of Antrim, in the event of the Presbytery of Bangor persisting in their refusal. This determination brought the affair to a crisis ; and, at length, a majority of the Presbytery proceeded to ordain. Against this proceeding, the minority protested, and appealed to the General Synod who sustained the ordination ; but the subscribing portion of the Bangor Presbytery withdrew from the majority, and formed the Presbytery of Belfast, which continues, until this day, to be one of the most intolerant religious bodies on the face of the earth. The Presbytery of Bangor never required, afterwards, even the form of a nominal subscription ; and their views of civil and religious liberty were so decided and generous, that, on presenting a petition from them in favour of Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation, in the year 1783, Henry Grattan declared that " the milk of human kindness flowed in their veins."

The Grey-Abbey controversy produced a multitude of pamphlets, which materially tended to advance the cause of free inquiry, all over Ulster. Mr. Stephenson, though according to his own account any thing but eloquent, so far secured the affection of his people by his sound sense and ministerial attention, that they allowed him to attend the Medical Classes in Glasgow College, for two Sessions, in order to complete the course which he had commenced during the time of his theological studies. Having obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine, he gratuitously attended his own people and several others, for some years : but, eventually, he entirely relinquished the ministry, and settled in Belfast as a medical practitioner. For upwards of forty years the name of " S. M. Stephenson, M.D." was conspicuous on the lists of every literary and charitable Institution.

As a Physician, he stood pre-eminent for his treatment of Fevers ; and, I believe that, under God, I owe my own life to his great skill and unwearied attention, as well as that of a most valued relative whose case was, by all others, deemed hopeless, but who yet happily survives, at the end of thirty-five years, a source of blessedness and an object of affection to all who enjoy the privilege of her acquaintance. For thirty-years, Dr. Stephenson maintained no unequal rivalry with the late able and amiable Dr. M'Donnell, of Belfast ; and stood second only to my most generous benefactor, Dr. James Forsythe, who now in his ninety-first year, still retains his bodily senses and extraordinary mental powers almost entirely unimpaired ; and who, after providing munificently for all his immediate kindred, is honourably spending the sunny evening of a useful life in largely contributing from his ample stores to the comfort and independence of others, who feel themselves as much honoured by his approbation as they are grateful for his bounty.

Although retired from the ministry, Dr. Stephenson continued to take a deep interest in the progress of religious truth, sometimes wrote sermons, often attended meetings of Presbytery ; and as a substantial compliment to his early profession, he generously attended the families of Presbyterian Ministers, without, in any one case, as I have been credibly informed, accepting a fee in the course of forty years ! Ministers, indeed, were not, in this respect, the only objects of his kindness ; for I have known him to refuse remuneration in other cases, for long and painful attendance, in consideration of the restricted means of those whom he had so largely served. In this, I have reason to believe, he only acted in accordance with the common practice of the liberal Profession of which he was so great an ornament—a profession more exposed to danger, anxiety, and fatigue, than any other, and at the same time far worse remunerated.

Dr Stephenson possessed great natural abilities, which he had sedulously cultivated. He was a good historian, a considerable natural philosopher, no mean antiquarian, and an excellent man. He was fond of the society of the young, whom he endeavoured always to draw out and to improve; and whom he delighted with his quaint humour and judicious observations. He was singular in many respects; and in none more so than in this—that he was always more courteous and attentive to the unfortunate than to the prosperous; and to require his aid was to secure his interest. To his kind recommendation, I was indebted, I believe, for my settlement in my present congregation—a settlement so interesting to myself, and which has probably given a colouring to many important events in the religious history of the last twenty years, owing to my local situation, and the exciting scenes amidst which I have lived. My venerated friend descended to the grave “like as a shock of corn cometh in, in its season fully ripe.” On such a grave, it would be unsuitable to shed a tear; but, I am sure, I shall be pardoned for having scattered upon it a few simple flowers with a grateful hand.

Domestic Mission.

STANHOPE STREET

The Annual Sermons were preached on Sunday, March 8th, in the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, by the Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A. The services were very well attended, especially in the evening, when the Belfast Congregations of All Souls, Mountpottinger, York Street, and the Mission joined with First Rosemary Street, in a United Service. The large congregation was deeply impressed by the venerable preacher's eloquent and moving sermon.

The Annual Meeting was held in the Central Hall, the following evening,

under the presidency of Mr. Harold Thomas, and the Rev. M. Watkins opened the proceedings with prayer.

The Committee's report, which was submitted by Rev. M. Watkins, Hon. Secretary, said there was little to report in the Mission's activities of outstanding interest during the year. The work was progressing quietly and satisfactorily, and the various agencies were doing well. Reference was made to the earnest and devoted work of Mr. Norman Kirkham, the Missioner. Unemployment continued widespread and distress was prevalent among their Mission folk, so that the demands made upon the poor's purse for relief were frequent and heavy. After referring to deaths of friends of the Mission during the year the report went on to say that these losses re-emphasised the need for new subscribers and helpers. All interested in the Mission's welfare could not refrain from viewing with grave concern the steady decline in the list of subscribers and the constant thinning in the ranks of workers. The Committee, therefore, renewed its appeal for new subscribers and workers, and urged young people to interest themselves in Stanhope Street, so that the religious purposes and beneficent intentions of the Mission might be more effectively served. A tribute of praise, was paid to Miss Malcolm for her work on behalf of the provident fund.

Mr. J. Mackenzie, Hon. Treasurer, presented the financial statement, for the year, which showed a small debit balance.

Mr. Norman Kirkham, who is in charge of the Stanhope Street Mission said the young people there were now taking a great share of the work, but they needed the outside help of some people from their Churches who would try to raise the tone of their work.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the reports, said the Mission had received two or three legacies, but he would like to emphasise that that gave no excuse for laxity in the matter of subscriptions. There was as much

necessity as ever for the payment of subscriptions, because in a large city like Belfast there was a great deal that a Mission such as theirs could do—its work would only be limited by two things—a shortage of voluntary workers and inadequate funds at its disposal. Referring to Mr. Kirkham's report, the Chairman said there was no doubt that in later years the Mission had many difficulties to face which did not exist in former years. He hoped a number of their people—especially their younger people—would consider Mr. Kirkham's appeal and come forward to give him some assistance. Mr. Eustace Gordon seconded the motion, and the reports were passed.

The General Committee were re-elected, likewise the Ladies' Committee with the additional names respectively of Mr. R. M. Laird, and Miss Hutton.

In response to a hearty vote of thanks for preaching the Annual

Sermons, the Rev. Alexander Gordon said it was a joy to him to be of service to the Domestic Mission. Its interests were very near to his heart, because of the good that flowed from its religious activities. The work it sought to accomplish was like the action of a ladder, in that it sought step by step, to lead those who came under its influence upwards to a more religious and useful way of life. In response to the Committee's appeal for new subscribers, and additional workers, he would suggest that the Annual Report might be circulated with advantage amongst those not already subscribers or workers.

Votes of thanks to the Missioner for his faithful services, to the voluntary workers, especially Dr. Malcolm Brice Smyth, and the Chairman, were passed with acclamation.

The pronouncement of the Benediction concluded an interesting meeting.

READY APRIL, 1925.

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"Jan of Windmill Land."

DUTCH OPERETTA.

On March 11th, 12th and 13th, there was given in the Central Hall, Belfast, the Operetta entitled "Jan of Windmill Land." Large and appreciative audiences assembled to support an entertainment, the proceeds of which were in aid of the funds of the Domestic Mission, Stanhope Street, Belfast. These audiences were amply repaid for their support. The Operetta was based upon the following story.—Two wicked Fays drop magic pills disguised as sweets with the power of making children naughty. They are eaten by two boys, Piet and Mathis, who plot against Jan a widow's son, who has gained their envy by carrying off a prize offered by the Burgermaster. Jan having been taken up to the Mynheer's house to be congratulated, Piet, following out of curiosity and climbing a wall to obtain a view of the proceedings, fell over. While wandering about the grounds he discovers a bracelet. He shows it to Mathis who suggests that they get rid of it by putting it into Jan's pocket. Mynheer Van Oost the Burgermaster arrives and announces loss of bracelet. Jan is suspected as he was the only stranger in the house. His mother, indignant at the accusation orders Jan to empty his pockets before all present, when out comes the bracelet. Mynheer calls on Jan to confess or he will send for the police. Frau Martendyke, Jan's mother suggests that as they will all be keeping the festival of St. Nicholas the next evening the matter should be referred to him, when if Jan is guilty, he will doubtless be handed over to Knecht Rupprecht, and get his deserts. English visitors are also invited to help keep the festival. The curtain descends upon the first act as they sing a farewell chorus to the visitors. With the second act comes St. Nicholas. Jan is charged before St. Nicholas who however, proclaims him innocent, and

asks for Piet and Mathis who are absent. The Gollywogs are sent in search of the two absentees. Then St. Nicholas dispenses some of his special sweets; one of the English girls finds one specially designed for lovers. The Gollywogs now return and bring Piet and Mathis with them and the two culprits are handed over to Rupprecht to be birched. Jan and his mother plead for them and the fairy Queen comes forward bringing the wicked Fays who eat St. Nicholas's sweets to break the spell, and to make them good again. In the same way Piet and Mathis have their former good characters restored to them.

Certainly the performers enjoyed the great privilege of presenting the Operetta on a most admirably appointed stage. The lighting could not have been improved upon, and the scenery specially designed and prepared for the occasion by Messrs. Gordon, Kirkham and Wooley, was in exact harmony with the requirements of the play. Frau Martendyke (Miss M. Boal) a widow and Jan's mother filled the part impressively. Once, just for a moment, the impression was given that she feared her son was guilty, but only for a moment, and thereafter she stoutly defended her son's innocence as all mothers always do in all countries. Jan (Miss A. Newman) was the hero of the piece, and being innocent of the charge brought against him emerged triumphantly at the last to the great delight of his mother, but even more so to that of Mynn (Miss A. Beattie), his sweetheart. Mynn sang charmingly "Little Wooden Shoon," and "Little Dutchy Housewife," and it is not too much to say that a repetition of these two songs would have been very acceptable to the audience. Gertrunn (Miss R. Black) was entrusted with quite a big share of the dialogue, and she performed her part with ease, with just the requisite facial expression and inflexion of voice. Her wise remarks made in defence of her Country and its manners and customs met with

responsive echoes here and there throughout the audience. The name St. Nicholas and the name Santa Claus are one and the same, the latter being a corruption of the former. It will be readily understood therefore what kind of part it was that was ably filled by Mr. N. Wooley. He brought presents for the children and had a store of several kinds of sweets. One kind of sweet was an antidote to a bad—morally speaking—kind of sweet given among children by the bad Fays. It was by means of this special sweet that the bad Fays were made into good Fays and the bad boys—in this case Piet and Mathis—were made into good boys. But there appears to be a difference between the *modus operandi* of St. Nicholas and that of Santa Claus. St. Nicholas has a servant Knecht Rupprecht (Mr. R. Lusk) whose duty it is to birch bad boys. Knecht was not by any means a ferocious man, but it was evident that he quite believed in the importance of his calling in life and that the birching of unruly boys was essential to the well-being of the community. There was a touch of disappointment in him when he found that his services were not required. He quite looked the part and sang very characteristically the song: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." There were English visitors to this little village in Holland, Mrs. John Bull and her two daughters (the Misses Newman, Ervine and Johnston), and they were of course quite English of the class that find it difficult to see manners and customs from a foreigner's point of view. Mynheer Van Oost, the Burgermaster (Mr. Donald Lockett) as became his important position in the village called loudly that Jan should be handed over to the police. The Burgermaster was very severe, but after a short talk between St. Nicholas and the Queen of the Fays (Miss Eileen Miller) who seemed indeed both of them to be omniscient, everything was satisfactorily explained and settled. As the Queen of the Fays passed through the graceful

movements of her dance a hushed silence came upon the audience which testified eloquently to the super-excellence of Miss Miller's performance. Max (Mr. W. H. M'Cafferty) represented a Dutchman who asked only that he should be allowed to sleep and that the women should work for the men. The choiuses were sung tune-fully and with vivacity and it was a pleasure to listen to them. The Gollywogs and Fairies were delightful and got a hearty reception to which their performance entitled them. The ward-robe mistresses (Misses McNeil & Montgomery) are to be congratulated. The dresses were "just the thing," from the white linen headdress down to the sabots and it was refreshing to note that the Dutchmen's trousers had been carefully patched for the occasion. Miss F. Newman presided at the piano, Mr. Eustace Gordon stage-managed, and under the capable conductorship of Rev. M. Watkins, a most delightful entertainment was given. A.T.

Obituary.

Mrs. Sarah M'Cormick, Killinchy.

The death took place, on March 3rd, 1925, of Mrs. Sarah M'Cormick at her residence, Ballydom, Killinchy. She had been in failing health for upwards of two years and during the last three months a marked change for the worse was seen in her condition, until within three weeks of her death it was obvious that the end was near.

The loss of this true and constant friend of our Congregation cannot be easily estimated. We can only describe it as one of the greatest bereavements this Church has experienced for thirty years. From girlhood to her last illness she was a mainstay in every department of Church life. Her influence was felt in every direction, and her co-operation, as a matter of course, was taken for granted. Thus no movement of any kind was initiated

in which she did not either take part or encourage with hearty goodwill. The value of early home training was conspicuously displayed in her. She sprang from a people on both sides well-known for their devotion to Unitarian Christianity and she worthily maintained the family tradition. At a time when the fortunes of her Church were at a lower ebb than they have been since, she devotedly determined to use all her energies to strengthen the things that remained; and she wrought to such a purpose that the Sunday School was kept at a high state of efficiency; largely by her efforts, the services of the Sanctuary were worthily maintained; in fact, she was a nucleus around whom the scattered elements of Congregational life gradually rallied. She did not rest content with stemming the tide of adversity, but in easier times wrought for the consolidation of the healthy elements in church life. She did not confine her activities to the Church exclusively, for the social and public life of this District had good cause to esteem her co-operation and to rate highly her organizing powers, which were of no mean order.

It is also pleasant to record that she maintained a large charity of the Christian type, not only for the poor and those less fortunate than herself, but also that kind of charity that loves not strife and unpleasantness. Hers was a moderating influence which loved to soothe ruffled spirits and which desired brotherly love to continue.

Much sympathy is felt both in the congregation and neighbourhood generally with her bereaved husband who feels her loss most keenly. May he be consoled by the esteem in which she was universally held, and upheld by the power of the Infinite Spirit, who fails no one who trusts in Him. We also tender our respectful sympathy to her brothers and sisters to whom she was bound by the closest ties of family affection. The funeral was on Thursday, March 5th, at 2 p.m. A very large number of friends and

neighbours gathered from far and near to pay a tribute of respect to her memory. The Rev. D. J. Williams officiated in the house and at the graveside, in the New Meeting House Green.

----- Mr. Alexander Spence. -----

Mr. Alexander Spence, passed away at his home in St. Jude's Avenue, Belfast, on St. David's Day. He was in his 85th year, and had been for some months in failing health, but was only confined to bed about three weeks prior to his death. Throughout his long, useful, and generous career he was a trusted and loyal member of our Church, and both in his public and private life he was upright and exemplary.

Moneyrea Church came naturally first in his affections, for it was the religious home of his childhood and young manhood. He remembered with reverence the venerable Rev. Fletcher Blakely, M.A., also several of his contemporaries, and the impressions they made for good upon his youthful mind were never forgotten. In the spring of 1863, he migrated to New Zealand, to seek to better his fortune in life, and as later years shew, he was not disappointed. He played his humble part in the pioneer work of those early years in New Zealand honourably, and contributed in no small way towards the improvement of means for transport between the business centres and remote gold-mining camps of New Zealand. The trading in which he engaged was arduous and risky but Mr. Spence was enterprising, and the miners and business men found that his word was as good as his bond, and prosperity followed in his train. For nigh a generation was he thus engaged, when the rewards of his steadiness and industry enabled him to return to his native countryside to a life of comparative leisure. To Moneyrea Church he gave on his return of his best ser-

vices for several years, in time, thought and money. He was not only a member of Committee, but for a time Church Treasurer as well. Public life also had its claims upon him, which he recognised with great conscientiousness by his services on the Lisburn Board of Guardians.

With his settlement in Belfast in 1911, came his more intimate association with the life of our Church as a whole. He served upon nearly all the Committees of our Church, and its kindred associations, and he brought into council a shrewdness and practical kindness that were invaluable. The Rights of Conscience Fund knew him as one of its Trustees, the Orphan Society as one of its most devoted Governors, when in office, and the Ulster Unitarian Christian Association as a life member and faithful Committee man. Such activities might reasonably have exhausted the interests and generousities of a younger man on behalf of his Church than Mr.

Spence, but such was not the case. For when his cousin Miss Bodel, mooted a few years before her death, the question of establishing a fund, for the assistance of deserving spinster ladies in reduced circumstances connected with our Church, he threw himself with characteristic energy into the scheme for compassing that end; and no one felt more satisfied than he when the Bodel-Mackenzie Fund came into operation in October, 1923. Verily did he feel that the work of his hands had been blessed, and as an expression of his thankfulness he gave the handsome donation of £500 last December, to further the beneficent work of the Fund.

Thus in brief is outlined the varied and generous activities of a devoted and loyal son of our Church; what shall we say of his character? It was such as to entitle him to very high praise. His natural diffidence prevented him from being widely known publicly, for he acted on the scriptural

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injunction of not allowing the "right hand know what the left hand doeth." In spite of all his experiences of men, and his knowledge must have been varied when we remember the nature of his New Zealand activities, his trust in the inherent good of mankind was unwavering. Men as a rule, were not necessarily bad or dishonest, was his conclusion, and thus shone forth his faith in the sureness of its interpretation of life of the Gospel of Jesus.

Mr. Spence's name is engraven at Moneyrea, on one of the Lyttle Memorial School Foundation Stones, it will be further carved in the memorials of our Church as a whole when the list of his many benefactions are published.

The funeral, which was private, took place, on Tuesday, March 3rd. The Revs. A. Whitford, and M. Watkins, conducted the services in the house and at the graveside at Moneyrea.

Reports.

Cairncastle Old Meeting-house—The monthly social meetings of the congregation, which have proved very enjoyable and popular, were brought to an end for the season on March 10th. They have been held in the School-room on the Tuesday evening nearest the full moon in each month for the last two winters. Games, puzzles, competitions, dancing, songs, recitations, musical solos, tea, and good comradeship make the evenings pass very quickly and happily. A charge of sixpence per night is made, and all agree it is the best value they ever get for sixpence. There have been four other social meetings held this winter as well as the six monthly gatherings. There was a dance on the 6th of February and another is expected to take place on Easter Monday. Then on January 16th there was the Annual Congregational Meeting which is always enjoyed. On March 6th the Minister and his wife gave a Children's and Young People's Party. On February 20th there was a special meeting

in honour of Mr. Thomas Robinson of Sallagh on his retirement from the Treasurership of the Congregation. He had held this office ever since 1895 when he succeeded the late Mr. Daniel Hunter of Ballymullock. As a token of their appreciation of his long service and of their cordial respect for him, his fellow worshippers presented him with a handsome barometer and a Coleman petrol lamp. After a speech from the Minister and the presentation of the gifts by Mrs. John Park and Miss M'Meekin, followed by a speech by Mr. James M'Clelland who referred to the many years during which Mr. Robinson had safely carried the family purse. Mr. Robinson, in the course of his reply, said, that these gifts serving to remind him of the good will and kindness of the Congregation, would bring heaven a little nearer to him. The rest of the evening was spent in games and singing, the party breaking up at midnight.

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*

Comber.—The monthly social evening in connection with the social and literary society was held on Wednesday, March 11th. There was a large number of members and friends present. The "Bachelor" members had charge of the programme, and they provided an excellent entertainment. Miss C. Murray sang several songs in her usual effective style, while Mr. Williamson, of Belfast was in excellent voice, and gave great delight and pleasure by his splendid rendering of all his songs. Miss Jeannie Smith gave two humorous recitations which were thoroughly enjoyed, and we felt we would have liked more items from her—so if she will kindly come on another occasion she will please rectify this defect. All the artistes were heartily encored and readily responded. Miss M. Osborne presided at the tea tables, and with the assistance of Miss Margaret Osborne and Miss G. Thompson, provided an excellent tea. The music for the dances was provided by Mrs. Munro Ferguson and Messrs Gillespie, and Donnan. The accompaniments

were played by Miss C. Murray and Miss Eva Andrews. The Rev. G. Davis proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the artistes for their services and to all who helped with the programme and the tea. A most enjoyable evening was brought to a close by the singing of the National Anthem. On Wednesday, March 18th, the Minister, the Rev. J. Glynne Davies in the Chair, the above society had an entertaining talk by the Hon. Lord Justice Andrews, on "Tales of Comber Life." The introduction to the talk was heralded by the B.B.C. establishing a branch in Comber for one evening only, from which the time signal, weather forecast and local news was broad-casted. The local news was distinctly local. Then followed a series of anecdotes concerning Comber worthies living and dead, but most of them were within memory of the crowded audience. A few stories from his experiences of the law were related also some of the comments passed when a cartoon of the lecturer published in the "Tele" was given, "Digging for Truth." This by the way is typical of the Unitarian attitude, not only in law, but theology also. The tales in reference to many of the members of the lecturer's family, were also appreciated. Mrs. John Andrews, Uraghmore, contributed a poem, in which many of the families living 70 to 100 years ago, about Comber, were mentioned. The Hon. Lord Justice Andrews also read a poem of his own composition in which many members of our congregation were mentioned, the Rev. Glynne Davies, Messrs. Orr, Simpson, D. Munn, W. Munn, and Miss Eva Andrews, and the organist. Many tales beloved by the lecturer's father, the Right Hon. Thomas Andrews were related and greatly enjoyed.

The stories and anecdotes were greatly enhanced by the racy way in which they were delivered in the Co. Down dialect. Mr. Alex. Orr, who had figured in one of the anecdotes proposed in his usual humorous and characteristic way a vote of thanks to

Lord Justice Andrews. Mr. D. Boyd, a visitor, seconded the vote of thanks which was very heartily passed by acclamation. The Hon. Lord Justice Andrews, responded by telling two more anecdotes. The proceedings terminated by the singing of the National Anthem.

* *

Mountpottinger.—The annual meeting of the Congregation took place on Wednesday evening, March 18th when a representative audience was present under the Chairmanship of Mr. Harold Thomas. The Committee's report showed that there had been a considerable amount of activity about the Church during the past year although it was pointed out that from one cause and another the numbers attending the Sunday services left much to be desired.

The annual financial statement while showing that the position was somewhere about the same as at the end of 1923 was duly approved by the meeting.

For the position of Hon. Secretary, Dr. R. J. Munn was re-elected, and a similar step was taken as regards the Hon. Treasurer Mr. E. R. Jackson, whilst the Church Committee was also re-elected with the exception that the place of Mr. W. McCullough who had resigned was filled by the selection of his brother Mr. Harry McCullough. Owing to ill-health Mr. J. Allen, Jr. resigned his position as Magazine Secretary and Miss B. M'Minn was elected to fill the vacancy.

The business having been disposed of, tea was served, and a short musical programme followed, songs being rendered by Mrs. J. Allen and Rev. M. Watkins, the duties of accompanist being undertaken by Miss M. Kirkpatrick and Mr. W. Wilson. A couple of recitations were also given by Mrs. E. R. Jackson.

During the evening a resolution of sympathy with Miss Maria Davidson in her long continued illness was unanimously passed and the Minister was requested to convey this in person

coupled with the expressed hope that with the expiration of another two months or so it might be possible for Miss Davidson to resume her wonted attendance at the services.

* *

Templepatrick.—The Annual Social gathering in connection with the Church, was held in the Roughfort school-room, on Friday evening, 6th March. There was a gratifying attendance of members, especially of young people who turned out in full strength. Proceedings commenced with tea, and it was noticeable that the tables were decorated with lovely flowers—narcissi and daffodils—kindly brought by Mrs. Hugh Lyle. After tea the minister, Rev. A. Turner, took the chair, and opened the programme with a review of their Church life during the past year. The retrospect he confessed did not supply the amount of satisfaction that might reasonably be expected. A slackness which was much to be deplored seemed to have invaded all their institutions, and, in his opinion, such slackness unless arrested was the kind of thing that led eventually to paralysis. He called upon the young people who were there that night in their numbers to appreciate their heritage, to realise that the Church stands for the best ideals in life, and that by identifying themselves with their Church and its interests they were actively supporting those ideals. Reference was made to serious losses incurred by death within a comparatively short period of time—Mr. Samuel Ritchie, Mr. A. Birkmyre, Miss Maggie Barnett, Mrs. Barron (not a member since marriage, but always a staunch friend), Mrs. Johnstone and Mrs. John Williamson. These were indeed serious losses. But over against these losses were to be placed some gains and amongst these Mrs. Humphrey Ritchie, who was with them that evening was cordially welcomed. At the conclusion of the minister's Address three new Trustees for the Manse Property, viz., Messrs. Archie Thompson, Humphrey Ritchie and Samuel Barnett, were

nominated to fill vacancies caused by death, and four new Elders, viz., Messrs. Humphrey Ritchie, Joseph Kell, Samuel Barnett, and James Campbell, were appointed. A new Committee of twelve members was appointed, four of whom will retire each year in rotation. Mr. John B. Moore, Secretary, presented the accounts. Mr. Robert Thompson's resignation of the position of Hon. Treasurer was accepted with regret, and Mr. Arthur Reid, Roughfort, Templepatrick, was unanimously appointed in his stead. Thereupon followed a musical programme. Miss Mary Wallwork sang "Break o' Day;" Miss Lily Watt, "The Songs my Mother Sang," and Mr. Arthur Reid, "Little Mary Cassidy." These singers each received encores, and sang again during the evening. They were greatly appreciated. Miss Getty played the accompaniments. The Rev. S. E. Bowen, Moderator, addressed the Meeting and spoke a word of hope and encouragement. He pointed out that we are now passing through a time of unrest and unsettlement, consequent upon great upheavals, but felt quite confident that we should survive such times and emerge among better things and higher ideals.

* *

York Street.—The Guild recently started in connection with this Congregation has already proved a success. Meetings are held weekly. The proceedings on Saturday 7th, took the form of a debate. After tea, Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A., took the chair. Mr. T. Brown moved that "In the opinion of this Guild, war can be abolished." Mr. J. Tait, M.A., opposed the motion. In the subsequent discussion there spoke Mr. J. Mitchell, Mr. H. Caldwell, B.A., Mr. George M'Bride, Mr. M. M'Conaill, B.Sc., Miss Kelly, Mr. G. Walker, Mrs. Loftus and Mr. N. Woolley. There was a very good attendance.

Owing to pressure on space, we are compelled to hold over some reports until next month.



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